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ABSTRACT

The author contends that accountability is not a matter of measurement of transfer of learning to the outside world, but rather a matter of making courses real, genuine, and pragmatic with substance, activity, and measurement within the course. The educator's responsibility lies in the development and offering of a learning environment which is relevant and which provides students opportunities to learn speech communication in ways they can apply to the real world. The student is responsible for the application of what he learns in class to the outside world. The author concludes that transfer from communication courses will take place if educators meet their responsibility in experiencing the "real world" with their students within the course and if the students in turn meet their responsibility in making applications to their world. (Author/LG)

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A PROBLEM OF TRANSFER FROM THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COURSE (OR ANY OTHER) TO THE REAL WORLD - WHAT'S THE HANG-UP?

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In partial preparation for my participation in this program I studied the dittoed proposal submitted by Vince DiSalvo in search of a key to what he could hope to expect from me after assigning me a topic - "Methods and Problems of Measuring Transfer from the Interpersonal Course to the Real World." Initially, I decided there was no key in the proposal and that the "cards were stacked against me." During the summer months and on into the Autumn I pondered the meaning of the topic. I sought the advice of colleagues of mine - Don Cegala, Jack Douglas, and William Brown to name but three; they sympathized with me. I also pondered notions that the topic assigned to me is one similar to concerns of a number of professionals other than teachers of speech communication. For instance, while serving on an Advance Studies in the Ministry committee for a clergyman concerned with pulpit communication I discovered his primary concern was transference of the teachings of Jesus into the lives of members of his congregation. The means of communication he was working on intensely was a "collegial approach to dialogical preaching -" getting members of the congregation involved in building the sermon and being responsible for subsequent Christian sorts of behaviors sought after by the minister and his "sermon builders." I have a friend who is a psychotherapist and who most sincerely seeks transference of learning in sessions with clients from the client-centered encounters to the world they experience as reality for themselves. Interestingly enough, the first example finds a friend of mine working through the one-to-many approach while the second through the dyadic approach to communication. In my view both approaches are valuable to learning and behavior modification.

But what about my problem? Specifically. In combing the proposal I identified at least five assertions (unsupported contentions) which rose from the pages to the echoes of my mind:

1. Today's teacher of speech communication is faced with the dilemma of making classroom material "relevant" so students get a "glimpse of the real world."

2. The interpersonal communication course, instead of the traditional public speaking course appears to be more relevant.

3. Basic course directors have been moving toward more of an interpersonal communication course.

4. Teachers of speech communication find themselves have to account for how they measure affective growth.

5. The "grader of speeches with a few tests" teacher may become frustrated when trying to measure a student's learning in terms of improving self-concept and the reduction of anxiety toward a variety of communication situations or in relating to other communicators better.

It seemed apparant to me also that the assertions were leading to the question of measuring for "explainable grades" that we and our students could live with in response to learned behaviors. I was also being asked to consider ways to identify and account for the extent to which these learned behaviors carry-over into the everyday "out of class lives" of students taking an alleged relevant course in speech communication.

The initial question that came to my mind and still rests there is this: Why worry about measurement of transference from the course in interpersonal speech communication (or any other) to the real world? Really! For purposes of empirical research gaining knowledge of subsequent and lasting effects may be worth a great deal of careful effort for measurement. For a "natural" or "regular" teaching-learning experience is it our responsibility to measure the extent to which a student carries over learned behaviors from our courses into his everyday life? Consider the fact that in this program Dave Schulke speaks about making subject matter relevant in interpersonal communication - if the subject matter is relevant and the instruction skillful can we not expect transference of behavior modification into the real world? Gus Friedrich speaks about pre and post communication competency assessment - with valid, reliable, and relevant assessment, can we not anticipate transference of behavior modification from the course to the real world? Cal Hyton speaks of measuring learning in similation and games, if the similation and games are realistic and measured carefully in class - can we not expect transference from the interpersonal communication course to the real world? Art Bochner and Clif Kelley bring to us ideas from related disciplines in the behavioral sciences. Will it be improbable

that use of this sort of information can assist us in developing substance and instruments of measurement to allow us to expect transference from the interpersonal course to the real world? Or are we to act as my brother-in-laws father did when his first son left home after completing the marriage ceremony - the father tossed and turned all night worrying about whether he had done enough as a father to prepare his son for this departure into a new life with a new wife!

In response to these thoughts of mine and the topic assigned me I come to this meeting as a director of a successful basic course in speech communication, and a popular one I might add, which is not required of students but rather is an option among general college requirements or an elective. I am deeply concerned that the experiences my students have with our course are neither a waste of time nor a waste of money. I am not concerned with naming my course an interpersonal communication course nor do I call it a public speaking course. I guess if I seek for anything it is constant change and growth in the nature and structure of the course as well as change and growth in myself, my graduate teaching associates, and most of all, our undergraduate students. If any two words most accurately describe what we aim for it is "dialogic speech communication" instead of "monologic speech communication." Within this context and the parameters of my topic I find two pressing issues to consider. The second issue, I believe, is most important to us:

1. Is it worthwhile or our responsibility to measure any transference from the course to the real world?

2. What do we <u>really</u> mean by the <u>real world</u> (it seems to be the loaded term in the topic)?

I contend that if "the real world" is defined in terms of an individual's life style out and beyond our course once completed the answer to question number one is "no." If "the real world" is included within the context of the course, where we measure in-class, I say "yea." Furthermore, I argue that if we deal with the real world we must bring perceptions and pieces of it into our courses.

As Clark, Erway, and Beltzer state in The Learning Encounter, "like it or not, our classrooms today must be a microcosm of the world at large." My paper, at this point, will thus deal exclusively with my questions and contentions. In general response to the first issue let me say that in terms of practical day-to-day teaching our ability to measure transference from our course to the experiences encountered by students as they roam the environments of their individual life-styles is highly limited and objectively subjective at best because obviously the "real world" varies with each person, even though many share common experiences and routine patterns of behavior. For example, my real world, in general terms, over the past fifteen years placed me in fraternity house rap sessions, speaking before church congregations, rapping and philosophizing in bars and dives half-way around the world, in counseling both as counselor and counselee, as a banquet speaker, in graduate seminars both as student and teacher, in hours of conversation with my wife over the past ten years, and now with two baby daughters just learning to make meaningful sounds, and a multitude of other communication situations. In fact we experienced our tenth anniversary as an anniversary "rap." As I walk about the campus of Ohio State University and talk to students I find an infinite variety of other real world experiences. From my interpersonal and public communication experiences and from my attempts to touch and glimpse into the realities other experience in the world today, especially on my campus, I must confess I do not feel responsible for measuring transfer of learning from my basic course in speech communication to the daily routines and encounters (dull or crises kinds). The responsibility I feel is to develop and offer a teaching-learning environment which is relevant and which does provide students opportunities to learn about speech communication in ways he or she can apply to the real world of their unique and individual experiences. I contend if we are accountable it is accountability for making our courses real, genuine, pragmatic, with substance, activity, and measurement within the course.

The student is accountable for the application of what he encounters and learns in our classes. If a professor were to serve as a genuine facilitator of learning, for example, and provide me with such a learning environment I would hold myself accountable for drawing meaning from the course and applying learned behaviors to my interpersonal and public relationships and the tasks I encountered during each day of life.

When the "real world" is life outside and beyond our course each one must then gauge oneself. If one's instruction and course have been relevant to contemporary life in relationship to speech communication philosophies, theories, objectives, and activities this personal gauging is possible. At this point I am reminded of the words of Kahlil Gibran:

> "The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and lovingness. If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."[2]

So it is with us. We can do all seemingly in our power to lead students to the threshold of their minds. The <u>real</u> measure of our effectiveness can be taken by them throughout their lives.

THE BASIC COURSE

Let us sharpen our focus at this point and turn to one particular domain in which we can lead students to the real world and the threshold of their minds: The Basic Course. For generations individuals within what we now call the discipline of speech communication have taken stands and offered preferences as to what "the first course in speech" ought to be. Several recent examples from The Speech Teacher give evidence and testimony to what people in our field suggest, contend, or even demand the basic course to be. For example J. W. Patterson has told us about the activities approach in the First Course,[3] John F. Kirn and Pat M. Taylor have written about a liberal arts approach to speech in a basic course,[4] Vincent Bevilacqua argued for an introduction to rhetoric as a first course in speech,[5] and John Stewart has advanced the case for an interpersonal approach to the basic course.[6] Theodore F. Nelson found himself recapturing enthusiasm for teaching the basic course through an interpersonal approach,[7] and the September 1972 issue of The Speech Teacher finds the angry, and somewhat snide voices of R. Samuel Mehrley and James G. Backes acting as if they are voices "crying out in the wilderness" for "The First Course in Speech: A Call for Revolution."[8] Even Vince DiSalvo assumes in the rationale for this program "It appears that interpersonal communication is the course that a teacher will offer his or her students when they press for subject-matter relevancy."

Whether "interpersonal or otherwise" within the messages of our colleagues seems to be the desire for a bridge between our basic courses and real life. The bridge between "rhetoric" or "communication" and "reality" of "life as people perceive and experience it" is a bridge which has existed in my search for a number of years. This disturbance is not unusual which may be the reason for Vincent DiSalvo writing "Today's teacher in the field of speech-communication is faced with the dilemma of making his or her classroom material 'relevant' for the students so that it is stimulating and provides them with a 'glimpse of the real world.'"[9] A real problem obviously center in the detail about what constitutes "relevancy" and "the real

world" we recognize varies considerably within the span of control of those who are concerned with providing and generating information for students in our courses. Some evidence of this variance is found in the articles about the first course cited earlier in this paper. Additional evidence is found by viewing the wide range of text materials aimed at the first course. Titles vary from Is That You Out There? An Exploration in Authentic Communication, with a humanistic focus on intrapersonal and interpersonal communication,[10] to General Speech Communication, with its general blend of theories and principles of "rhetoric" and "communicology" and both descriptive and prescriptive information,[11] to a book I co-authored, The Rhetorical Dialogue: Contemporary Concepts and Cases, which generates rhetorical and communication theories as concepts, and ties them to important voices and choices in contemporary life.[12] Finally additional evidence of variance can be seen in a study which ought to be updated (it is two years old now) "The First Course in Speech: A Survey of U.S. Colleges and Universities." Here, among other claims the researchers report "In spite of the increased concern for 'communication' and 'communication theory' apparent in our journals and scholarly papers presented at our conventions, the basic course in the vast majority of the reporting schools continues to take a public speaking or fundamentals approach. . ."[13] The articles about the basic course, the books written for the basic course, and the survey indicates variance and status quo; and supports the realization that change for reality is taking place. This is probably of little comfort to those of you who came here for specific answers.

My own view of "reality" as it pertains to the basic course in speech communication is to have students journey into themselves in working with relevant materials and contemporary ideas expressed through a variety of voices; some the voices of theorists in rhetoric and communication while others the voices of people in our time who are confronted with important issues and topics inescapable to any educated person who seeks to understand and cope with the world at large. Furthermore,

reality for me consists of the interaction which takes place as the students communicate dialogically during the class sessions and after sessions when they discuss the course in their dorms, apartments, fraternity houses, sorority houses, bars, coffee shops and the like, and discuss these experiences in a variety of course assignments, written and oral. Reality also exists in the course when students are given the opportunity to think about and engage in interpersonal communication as my colleague at Ohio State Leonard Hawes views it, "the enactment of routines." According to Hawes, "interpersonal communication is the mutual displaying of patterned behavior with a symbolic referent in a space-time context." Because most of our time is spent in enacting routines which involve other people, Hawes contends we need to study communication as the enactment of routines. To combat the charge of indifference - "who cares about these routines?" Hawes maintains routine activities function simultaneously as social cement and lubricants.[14] He offers a clear explanation which can generate behavioral objectives and structured activities for the first course in speech communication. Finally, I view reality in the class as the "give and take" among students which incorporates speech communication technique, structure, and format, to the definition of dialogue offered by Richard Johannesen; the communication attitude, principle, or orientation that includes at least genuineness, accurate empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, presentedness, and the spirit of mutual equality.[15] These are my approaches to glimpsing reality.

When I ponder DiSalvo's topic - methods and problems of measuring transfer from the interpersonal communication course to the real world I am reminded of the reaction of my colleague, Bill Brown who said something like - "The real world? The real world! Dammit John I am tired of hearing people talk about the real world. The classroom is the real world for us when it comes to teaching. That's where we and our students experience the real world together - when we work together in our classrooms!" I concur with Brown. Unless we have an omnipresent television system

for monitoring the lives of all of our students in 1984 fashion we will have to bring the real world to school and not regard our classrooms as isolated domains in ivory towers or gardens of communicative edens. The reality as I have just talked about is reality which I contend must be brought into the class where we measure, evaluate, and from where we send out our students to cope with "the reality they perceive and experience" in their lives.

What constitutes "the real world" for each of us, and each of our students, quite obviously varies with each individual life style. Still we can select domains of perceived reality which generally affect the lives of our students and which seem especially relevant to them (and us) and perhaps silence those cries of "accountability!" a great many of us hear from time to time (even if many are the "echoes of our mind"). As with you I am looking for "glimpses of reality" (to use DiSalvo's term). My views are printed in one of the books I use to serve my purpose, a book I co-authored with Bill Brown: The Rhetorical Dialogue: Contemporary Concepts and Cases, Dubuque, 1972. In the preface to the book we state the following:

> "The process of education today ought to provide students with learning experiences which will enable them to develop skills and to critically understand ideas and concepts both essential and relevant to contemporary life. This book is designed for such a purpose . . . It is not uncommon to begin the study of rhetoric and communication with a review of the history of the development of rhetorical theory or with a detailed model depicting all of the significant variables in the process of communication. However, we have chosen as a point of departure to consider the need for meaningful dialogue in our society . . . Communication as dialogue is not considered solely in terms of dyadic interaction, but in a broad sense which encompasses all forms of human communication ranging from one person's interaction with material in our book to a consideration of a public speaking occasion where a lone spokesman faces a crowd of thousands or more ... . We recognize the frequency with which students are exposed to messages outside the "ivory tower" and the difficulty they often have in relating the theory of the communication classroom and laboratory to what they see and hear. Therefore we present case studies which treat highly important subjects and issues . . . This book finds its theoretical base both contemporary communication research and ideas developed from the rhetorical tradition. . . We stress conceptualizing ideas about communication because we feel students in communication courses have often found themselves tangled in a maze of rules and principles which become difficult to memorize and

> easy to forget. We are far more descriptive than prescriptive in our approach, and we present more questions than answers. But then, in life as communicators, we all must deliberate, evaluate, and determine answers for ourselves."[16]

Admittedly, I suspect that a majority in our field would choose different reading material, especially because of their affection for one of the four of the six most overused words in our field - public speaking, interpersonal communication, performance, and theory (the other two being "relevance" and "accountability"). Something about a title - Rhetorical Dialogue sounds mysteriously suspicious doesn't it? But few would argue (I hope) with the notions expressed in these excerpts from the preface. Still I believe my remarks are generally applicable for us all.

I have, I supposed, philosophized about "the real world" and the speech communication classroom without providing any specific or concrete devices to satisfy those in my audience desirous of instruments for measurement of transfer. But the approach, stance, and variance I have focused on within the time and space limits provided me are necessary for us to grapple with individually if we are going to deal with a notion of "transfer" and "real world" in our thoughts and arguments about our courses. As I approach my conclusion I want to submit two additional matters to ponder in adding reality in our courses in interpersonal communication. Reality is shaped and determined to a large extent by exciting instruction and realistic objectives.

INSTRUCTION

We need to consider in facing the notion of transferring learning from the classroom to the real world is what constitutes an optimum teaching - learning environment, which indeed brings the real world into the context of the classroom and the aims and goals of the course. The primary answer to this problem is in the eyes of those of us who facilitate learning.

Let me contend that the most salient factor for creating an exciting and "real world" course, in my view, is the individual classroom instructor and what he brings to guide his students. One can know all of the latest theories, be

apprised of all of the most exciting games and activities derived from behavioral science and the rhetorical tradition and know a great deal about test construction, but if one is an unexciting, unimaginative, stuffy, teacher out of touch with the place "our students heads' are at," the teaching - learning environment and its relationship to the real world is bound to be a drag and an artificial experience in tedious time consumption for the majority of students in the course. I am reminded that as a doctoral student at Purdue University, where by the way I received a very good graduate education in communication, perhaps one of the most exciting and relevant teaching - learning environments I experienced was in my second course in French - because of the realistic and exciting teaching approach of one Mr . Ross. Not only did I learn to translate French reasonably well but I learned about life through the eyes of Camus, Sarte, DeGaulle, and a host of others and this learning affected my outlook. Regardless, I never once hesitated going to the class (which in anticipation during early residency created much fear in my mind when pondering my eventual requirement to attend)! Why did I attend and why did I get turned on by this course - the instruction brought the real world into class through a highly charged instructor who knew his audience and who had the determined ability to guide and challenge their thinking in realistic ways!

Carl Rogers supports my notion with the following statement about psychotherapy; and I believe it applies to speech communication instruction:

> I believe the quality of my encounter is more important in the long run than is my scholarly knowledge, my professional training, my counseling orientation, the techniques I use in the interview. In keeping with this line of thought, I suspect that for a guidance worker also the relationsnip he forms with each student - brief of continuing - is more important than his knowledge of tests and measurements, the adequacy of his record keeping, the theories he holds, the accuracy with which he is able to predict academic success, or the school in which he received his training."[17]

Personally, I believe this view of Rogers holds true for those of us in speech communication who want to create an environment which will facilitate effective

transfer of learned behaviors from our courses to the world outside and beyond. We need the knowledge, the theories, an aim for accuracy, but if we approach the classroom as the faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement or elective, a sterile force to pass information along and speak largely in the tongues of abstraction, the knowledge, theories, and aims are minimized if effective at all for the majority of students (exceptions are the rare students who manage to learn in spite of poor, dull, and incomprehensible teaching).

In a lecture Rogers once delivered, he claimed the aim of education is the facilitation of change and learning. "The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a bases for security."[18] Thus, Rogers goes on in his message to describe the teacher as a facilitator of learning, detailing basic essential attitudes for such an individual: realness, entering into a relationship with the student without presenting a facade is one; a "prizing" learner, a nonpossessive caring for each student, which encourages them to open up and express themselves in the course without fear and within a psychologically supportive climate for communication; empathic understanding, where the facilitator develops a sensitivity and awareness of the way the speech communication course and learning seems to the student.

One student who evidently felt his instructor had facilitated such learning wrote at the end of a course, Rogers reported: " . . . This course is not ending with the semester for me but continuing . . . I don't know of any greater benefit which can be gained from a course than this desire for further knowledge. I feel as though this type of class situation has stimulated me more in making me realize where my responsibilities lie, especially as far as doing required work on my own. I no longer feel as though a test date is a requirement for reading a book."[19]

Thus, I am contending as instructors of speech communication, especially interpersonal communication, we must be open, genuine, positive, exciting in developing quality in our relationship with students in the facilitation of learning which in turn can have a lasting effect on what our students take with them when they leave the classrooms and the experiences with our courses. At this point I am reminded of two men who came to Ohio State as candidates for a position in our Department. The man who did not get the position, among other things, claimed to be a teacher of interpersonal communication. Yet in a day and a half, from my perception, he instigated more poor interpersonal relationships with my colleagues and a top college administrator than I would want to instigate in my professional lifetime. What is a major difference that makes a difference in bringing "the real world" into our courses, interpersonal or otherwise? You and I - facilitators of learning or perhaps sterile theorists in "the academic game."

OBJECTIVES

A second way of bringing the real world into our courses is through a genuine commitment to and application of behavioral objectives in speech communication instruction.

In the summer 1970 issue of The Central States Speech Journal Bob Kibler, Larry Barker, and Don Cegala issued the following remark:

> "In the past few years, convention papers have been presented and several articles have appeared in The Speech Teacher specifying the need for the use of behavioral objectives. In addition reports of recent conferences attended by speech scholars include recommendations and guidelines advocating a concerted effort to formulate and use behavioral objectives in pre-school through college level speech-communication instructional programs. Unfortunately, there has been little evidence to indicate that the majority of speech teachers are employing behavioral objectives in their courses. If speech education is to be in the main stream of instructional theory and practice, it is imperative that speech teachers recognize the use of behavioral objectives as a viable influence on students.[20]

In a more recent statement Alfred Canfield seems to stress that in preparing objectives and goals in the basic course we need to clearly tell the students why we have developed an objective in terms of its relationship between the theory and exercises of our classrooms and 'that piece of the world' we choose to focus on as reality for our students to draw into their classroom experience.[21] Perhaps many in our field do use realistic behavioral objectives in speech communication instruction but no one has reported data to serve as evidence. Perhaps many in our field pay "lip service" to the use of behavioral objectives but just do not find the time necessary to learn how to write them and then to actually prepare them with care. This sort of evidence is yet to be submitted.

We do know that an easy route to preparing behavioral objectives is available in the September 1972 issue of The Speech Teacher, in the form of an essay "Writing Behavioral Objectives: A Programmed Article."[22]

My strong contention then is if we want to see students learn something in your course to be transferred into their behaviors in the "real world" we need to use behavioral objectives tailored to what constitutes the real world in our

courses. What appears to be a very good example of this sort of use of behavioral objectives also appears in the September 1972 issue of The Speech Teacher. Evidently Sarah E.Sanderson was pressed for "relevance" and "accountability" in her teaching - learning tasks. From my perspective her tasks are far more awesome than are mine; I am pressed for "relevance" and "accountability" in the basic course in speech communication while she is responsible for the same in oral interpretation. Consider her own words for a moment:

> "In the fall of 1970 the gauntlet was flung down by several of my colleagues - 'what is the body of content for a course in reading aloud? What are your objectives? What are your instruments for testing these objectives? What are your criteria? Not having a ready answer that would satisfy my inquisitors but being convinced that there were factors contributing to the long range goals of studying and teaching intellectual, affective, and aesthetic communication and that these were definable goals - measurable in terms of behavior - I accepted the challenge of designing and testing objectives for a course in reading aloud.'"[23]

The questions inscribed on the gauntlet flung down by the colleagues of Professor Sanderson are questions each of us who teach speech communication (interpersonal or otherwise) must face if we are genuinely interested in the transfer of learning from the basic course to the real world. What is our body of content (in relationship to the real world)? What are our objectives (in relationship to the real world?) What are our instruments for testing these objectives (in terms of the real world?) What criteria do we use that is directly related to what takes place in our course and the real world?

At the least each of us could adhere to a format similar to that suggested by William Engman, which is summarized in a four-phased model.[24] Engman's model is a result of the contention that the ability to write behavioral objectives is but one aspect of a course and an instructor must understand the relationship of his objectives to what occurs throughout his facilitation of learning. The four phases are the following:

1. Stating objectives in behavioral terms.

2. Designing appropriate learning experiences that are based upon these objectives.

3. Evaluation of the behavioral objective and the instructional experiences used with it.

4. Analysis and revision of the behavioral objectives based upon the results of phase three.

SUMMARY

Thus after reviewing the proposal for this program and searching within and outside myself to see "where my head is at" on the question of methods and problems of transfer of learning I can honestly say:

1. I do not feel responsible or accountable for transfer if this word means the student's application of what is available in my course to his life beyond it. I am accountable to provide a course which is theoretically sound and realistically valuable to allow maximum transfer - the student is accountable for application.

2. The basic course is something most of us share in common, and our literature gives evidence that there is a wide variety of opinions about course content and the real world - the variety centers in the six most overused words; public speaking, interpersonal communication, theory, performance, relevance, and accountability.

3. The important fact, however, is that ~~in our~~ basic course, and others for that matter, we can bring the real world into the context of the courses and experience the real world with our students - together! Teaching concepts and not long lists of rules and facilitating meaningful dialogue can move us a long way toward experiencing the real world with our students.

4. Two major ways to teach concepts and dialogue to create a real world environment within the course are instruction and behavioral objectives. The views of the likes of Carl Rogers, and the writings of Larry Barker, Don Cegala, and Bob Kibler explain in detail what I have in mind.

What's the "hang-up?" Transfer from the interpersonal course (and others) will take place if we realistically and ideally meet our responsibilities in experiencing the "real world" with our students within our courses and if they meet their responsibilities in making application. In the meantime, more among us need to experience frustration about whether the transfer of application takes place. Recently I talked to a colleague at another university who was so bothered about this matter of transference he was considering turning to another profession for work. What a desperate conclusion to arrive at!

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